

寶塔詩雜

Pagoda  
Or  
Jewels

by

Mona Kwan





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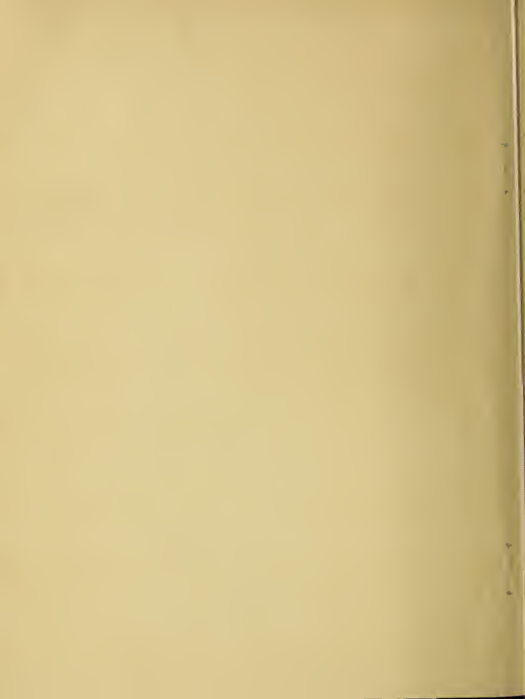
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Best Wishes to Cousin Fattie

Apr. 18-1927  
from Ella.



Will,

Sylvia  
Moon Kwan

With compliments —

From  
Moon Kwan.

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DRAWING BY  
HOWARD WILLARD





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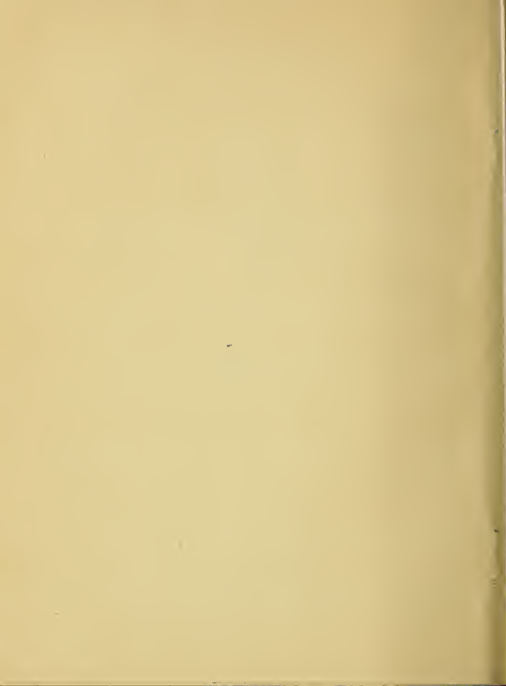
# A PAGODA *of* JEWELS



By  
**MOON KWAN**

**JOSEPH A. ELIASON**  
ENTERPRISES

BRYSON BLDG. LOS ANGELES



A PAGODA  
OF JEWELS



TO ONE—

*Who has the soul of a lily  
And whose fancy can see a turtle  
As lovely as a butterfly. . . . .*



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Forword . . . . .	10
Part 1. Twelve Poems	
REFLECTIONS OF THE WANDERER . . . . .	13
AMBITION . . . . .	14
INCENSE AND YOU . . . . .	15
(And Illustration)	
TO WITTFR BYNNER . . . . .	17
MELANCHOLY . . . . .	17
TO A PINE TREE . . . . .	18
GHOST OF LOVE . . . . .	18
UPON THE PATH OF LIFE . . . . .	18
"THE GREATEST THING IN LIFE" . . . . .	19
A WHITE ROSE . . . . .	19
THE LITTLE BIRD . . . . .	20
THE STREAMS OF FATE . . . . .	20
Part 2. Bits of Nonsense or 'Chinese Junk'	
LOO KOO—NOODLE POET . . . . .	23
COOKING IS ART—EATING IS ART . . . . .	23
THE AMATEUR MOONSHINER . . . . .	24
SAILOR NO GOOD FOR HUSBAND . . . . .	25
CHOP-STICK POOR KICK FOR 'MELICAN MAN' . . . . .	26
Part 3. A Fancy	
A TALK OF THE ECLIPSE . . . . .	29
Part 4. A One-Act Play	
THE TURTLE AND THE LILY . . . . .	35

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## FOREWORD

*Honorable readers, before you peruse the following pages, I wish to make clear to you the motive behind these lines. First of all, these fragments were written not because I wanted to express myself to the world, but rather to express the thoughts of the world to myself. Since they are only my ideas from the thoughts of the world, they are, therefore, neither new nor original,—but as old as the world itself. They are like the winds that blow, the rains that fall, the snows that drift and the clouds that float and all appear at random in the Universe swayed by the unseen hand of Nature.*

*Who can say that the winds, rains, snows and clouds of this year are not the same as those of last or the year to come? And who can say that the sky of China is not the same as the sky of America? Since neither time nor space can claim the things of Nature as its own, then how can I claim that the thoughts of the world are creations of mine? My work is not the picture that the mirror reflects, but the mirror that reflects the picture. So it is for you, diligent readers, to look into the mirror and see whether the image is ugly or beautiful. And lastly, I wish to apologize for not having the ability to polish the mirror as bright as it might be.*

MOON KWAN



## REFLECTIONS OF THE WANDERER

— 1 —

For eight years I have drifted in America  
Like the rootless weed in the sea;  
Vain, vain is the thought of the future path—  
Ah, who can foretell? . . .

— 2 —

Into the world of games I chase the deer,  
But some artful hunter is already there!  
A stray sheep upon a rocky pass  
Is not a sign of fortune.

— 3 —

Alas, the frothy cloud has no definite home,  
It is ever so since the ancient time;  
And likewise the endless sea of struggle,  
How incessant are its surging waves!

— 4 —

On the Western window I lean my head  
And fain would search the dream of old,  
But my heart wings back to Fatherland  
When it stirs to the renewal of Spring.

— 5 —

Like smoke, lightly the rain drifts through  
the night:

With a warmthless volume by a dim and chill  
lamp

I reflect upon the lonely person of the lowly  
me—

Yet, after all, wealth and fame are as vain as  
dreams . . .

Do I not already hear the cuckoo's wistful  
call?

It urges the wanderer to return!

---

AMBITION

Ambition, how powerful it is!  
The spirit of ancient Rome.

Ambition, how heroic it is!  
The master of Napoleon.

Ambition, how deceitful it is!  
The mirage in the desert of life.

Ambition, how cruel it is!  
The enslaver of human souls.

Ambition, how inimical it is!  
The creator of separations.

Ambition, how fanciful it is!  
The builder of air-castles.

Ambition, how heartless it is!  
The breaker of home and romance.

Ambition, how deadly it is!  
The god of slaughter and war.

A man of ABILITY with no Ambition is like a  
water-lily planted in the heart of the desert.

A man of AMBITION with no ABILITY is like a  
drop of water poured into a burning house.

A man of ABILITY and AMBITION with no  
SENSE of DIRECTION is like one climbing  
a tree in the hope of catching a fish.

A man who succeeds is he who succeeded in  
making his SOUL the MASTER of his  
AMBITION.

---

### INCENSE AND YOU

Pure is the fragrant incense  
And the flower-like soul of you,  
Divine is its drifting beauty  
And the delicate form of you.



*Incense and You*

DRAWING BY  
HOWARD WILLARD



Magic and mystic musings  
The scented smoke has brought,  
But none as thrilling and haunting  
As the tenderness of your thought.

Sweet and gracious its spirit  
As it slowly wafts on high  
In gentleness and softness  
Like the gaze of your kind clear eye.

Caressing and compelling  
Like perfumed mist a part  
So is your precious loveliness  
Enshrined within my heart.

A-dream, a-dream is the redolent air  
And dreamily I see the jewel in your hair.

---

### TO WITTER BYNNER

I, a wanderer; thou a weaver of the petal-speech,  
In the bridge-land of the East and West have met.  
Though flowers may bloom and fall,  
The Spring breeze shall not forget.

---

### MELANCHOLY

I used to think there was a Paradise  
Where sorrow, grief and care should never be;  
There I sought to retire.

Alas! such a place is a vain dream,  
Sorrow fills the Universe like wind and rain.

**TO A PINE TREE**

Thou art larger and loftier now, beloved pine tree;  
Much larger than thy former size,  
And much loftier than thou used to be.  
Art thou too large for the rambling vine to grow  
upon thee now?  
Art thou too lofty for the homeless bird to nest  
upon thee now?  
Nay, thou art ever gracious, generous and fair!  
But only the sacred phoenix should share thy  
grace,  
And only the delicate ferns would dare embrace.

---

**GHOST OF LOVE**

Whence comest thou, ghost of love?  
From the hell below or the Heaven above?  
From the world without or the heart within?  
From the path of virtue or the sea of sin?  
  
Thou comest like a tender wind, soothing and  
singing,  
Singing songs of happiness, sorrow, joy and pain.  
Thou goest like a temple bell, sobbing and ringing,  
Ringing tunes of loneliness, shadow, loss and gain.

---

**UPON THE PATH OF LIFE**

Upon the Path of Life I roam  
And search for the Light of Truth . . .  
  
But lo, so dark, so dark the Path!  
Where is the Light of Truth?

**"THE GREATEST THING IN LIFE"**

(Written After Seeing D. W. Griffith's Photoplay)

God forgot the world:  
Man lost his soul.

Selfishness, jealousy, vanity, pride  
Stirred the hateful wave of human tide  
When came the hordes of Huns,  
Who only valued men as guns.  
Such test of horrors, set our hearts aflame,  
To make us know Life's greatest thing,  
Which knows no race, no rank,  
No rich nor poor,  
Which builds the divine bridge to every bank  
And reaches each man's door.

'Tis Love—the Greatest Thing in Life:  
Not alone that which we offer to a wife,  
But that which in the bosom glows  
And from inward to outward flows  
Into the empty souls of God's forgotten beasts  
Until they know the brotherhood of peace.

---

**A WHITE ROSE**

A white rose—a frail rose  
Obscure and lone in a garden grows . . .

Does it wish to adorn the dragon-vase  
For guests to gaze at its perfect face,  
Or rather dwell in its shadowed place  
And quietly fade in nature's grace?

### THE LITTLE BIRD

Little bird, thou hast been hovering all the day . .  
There are many branches on many a tree,  
Yet thou art not able to choose one to nest.

Ah, I know, little bird, I know . . .

I, too, have been wandering for a long, long way . .  
There are many things and faces I see,  
But none that is able to offer me rest.

Ah, little bird, I know!

---

### THE STREAMS OF FATE

The Streams of Fate flow  
With murmuring waters, drifting cold.

Vague, wordless fears . . .

Here two flowers grow  
Through lonely years.

Their souls are ours in woe,  
Petals are tears.



Bits *of*  
Nonsense  
or  
'Chinese Junk'



**LOO KOO—NOODLE POET****POOR NOODLE-POET**

Hallo! august 'Melican man,  
Me wantta tell you samething,  
Make you laugh and sing.  
Ah, you say me no can?

Oh please, Let's try at least,  
Don't treat me as if a beast.  
Me wantta laugh and sing  
Likee birds in Spring.

Me wantta be a maker of pome,  
But them say me "No-body-home!"  
Alas! alas! what can'e do?  
Poor noodle-poet Loo Koo!

Ah, me wantta know  
What made Walt Whitman so  
Swell with fame,  
And people tell him . . .

He gota beard white and long,  
That what made known his song!  
Me thenk me gonta get one too,  
Maybe it will advertise poor Loo.

---

**COOKING IS ART—EATING IS ART**

Long time ago me gota job fo' cook,  
Learnt ta makee cake—from out a book.  
One day me makee a strawbelly pie  
And it was beautiful fo' the eye.

Me took it outa table with pride.  
When boss cut it him suddenly cried:  
"O Loo! I can't eat, too much juice!"  
Me 're verie muchee surpri'd and said "E'cuse."

"Cooking is art,  
Eating is art.  
Me done me part,  
You show you art."

He took the pie with his big hand  
And ate just likee jazz band!  
When the juice ran down his chin  
He licked it—heap easy—likee sin.

---

### THE AMATEUR MOONSHINER

Me hikee up hills other day,  
Met a wild man on my way.  
He made a funny face as he came near  
And whispered with much mystery in my ear:

"In my cave I got a trunk  
Full of stuff to make you drunk.  
. . . Slip over a dollar—  
I show you my parlor."

No, thanks," said I,  
"Me are not dry."  
And passed him by.



"This morning, me saw him on street,  
Tramping by with jail-ward feet.  
"By gum!" he cried with pain,  
" . . . . . Caught again!"

---

### **SAILOR NO GOOD FOR HUSBAND**

Last night, fo' moonlight's sake,  
Me walkee 'round West Lake;  
Saw a pretty damsel and a sailor boy,  
Spoonin' cute as a Christmas toy.

He got sentimental and proposed  
While she lingered with eyes closed:

"Do you love me?" asked he,  
But cold as glass was she.

"Will you marry me?"  
Again asked he,  
As silly as can be.

But she was silent,  
Showed him no relent.

"Will you be my wife?"  
He questioned with fire  
From keen desire.

She was having the time of her life,  
Amused, but stayed dumb.  
His heart beat likee drum.

"Dog-gone-it!" he finally cried,  
Got up with a sort of cockadoo pride,  
"I have made myself a fool!"

"No," said she, "You are no fool,  
But you are too cool,—  
Too cool to be my groom:

You have a ship for room,  
And an ocean for home."

---

### CHOP-STICK POOR KICK FOR 'MELICAN MAN

One day me ate Chop Suey in Chinatown,  
Saw 'Melican man with heavy frown.  
"How the h—l!" he said with wicked tongue,  
"Can you eat with chop-stick?  
It makes me go crazy and sick!"

"Be patient, 'Melican man,  
By and by you surely can."  
Said me, trying to be nice,  
But he twinkled his eye like a mice.

"Gosh!" and pretended to be wise,  
"I would be a fool  
If I use such a queer tool!  
You can't get a 'kick'  
Out o' that chop-stick."

A Tale  
*of*  
The Eclipse  
A Fancy



## A Tale of the Eclipse

When God created the sun He created the moon to be its mate. The sun is the Master of Day—masculine and warm; the moon is the Hostess of Night—feminine and cold.

Now it is the Will of God that Lady Moon should come out of the East with full face to meet her mate, Master Sun, once a month for a few moments before he enters the West-gate to rest. This enables them to renew their intimate feeling and reminds them that they are the heavenly models of perfect companionship which is set for mankind to look upon, and that their duties are to work in harmony to enlighten the Universe.

But alas, Lady Moon is a bashful maiden, too bashful to show her entire features before the males. She is soft-hearted, though timid and cold, yes, very cold. She always wears a veil to cover part of her face when duty requires her to appear in the day. "How inconsiderate God is," she had selfishly thought, "to insist that I should come out with my full face to meet that Fire-like Villain once a month!"

It is plain that she dislikes Master Sun's flamy appearance and dreads the coming of the Meeting-Day. The whole family of Heaven always have pity on her because of her bashfulness. They do not wish to see her suffer in facing her disagreeable mate for these few unescapable moments, and often Sister-Mist veils her or Cousin-Cloud entertains him.

Now it happened that, by the command of God, Aunt-Wind took Sister-Mist and Cousin-Cloud for a visit in the South on the very day of the Fatal-Meeting. The desert spread clearly from horizon to horizon like a sheet of gold; the meadow

stretched vastly miles and miles away like a piece of green jade. The restless ocean lay with intense moods and the motionless mountain stood calmly in repose. Everything was vivid and bright. Through the great space of silence and emptiness floated an air of resentment . . . For it was time for Lady Moon to appear! Timidly, oh so timidly, she tiptoed out the gray Gate at the East according to God's Will. There was a slowness in her motion and her countenance was yellow with fear. How frightful and loathsome was her unbeloved mate's radiant face!

But oh, what joy and delight for Master Sun! Has he not been traveling and toiling alone all day and without a soul of female tenderness near him? Now he beheld the full beauty of Lady Moon and was intoxicated. His glaring eyes were glowing with golden dreaminess, changing into dull amber and then turning into lustrous red. "How thoughtful God is!" he secretly rejoiced, "to have Aunt-Wind take Sister-Mist and Cousin-Cloud away. So seldom I have this pleasure!"

Alas, how Lady Moon suffered! What humiliation she endured! If the Shooting-Star had been there she would have directed it to shoot into his unholy eyes! But none were there—alas, none to help her. Even her dearest maid, the Evening-Star, was still locked in the Day-Chamber of Heaven . . . Aye, she could do nothing but to endure. She had glazed her blue eyes with resentment and frozen her pale face with fright, though Master Sun heeded her not.

"Oh, what a pity that thou art so timid and disagreeable." Master Sun grinned disdainfully, "Did the Creator not mean to create thee as a thing to look at—a thing to amuse?"

Lady Moon rose a bit in anger. The great humiliation had overcome her bashfulness and fear, and no longer could she retain her gentle manner. "I need not thy pity nor thy attention," she sharply retorted. "My love lies with mankind; I love them and they all love me, whether rich or poor; rough or gentle, they never tire of seeing me; I lure the poets to sing and lovers to call; I soothe the weary travelers to rest and console the broken hearts of the lonely ones. What good art thou? There are none on earth who love thee; they loathe thy cruel Nature of Fire!"

"Ha! ha!" Master Sun laughs amusingly, "How ignorant art thou! Knowest thou not my power? Oh well, what can one expect from the sharp and good-for-nothing tongue of a female? Shall I tell thee about my power? Keep thyself calm then, lest thou may faint away ere I finish. I light the Universe for man to toil; heat the earth for plants to grow; steam the water into air for rain and give warmth to the world; without me, all things would fail to grow and humanity cease to live. Now how would my power compare to thy frivolous beauty that can only bring to mankind a mere moment of pleasure?" He paused here and gazed at Lady Moon with an air of great importance as though he had expected her to faint upon hearing of his power. But Lady Moon did not faint. She was cold and impassive. "Well I must retire now," he continued in a disappointed tone, "Farewell lady, till next month. I shall breathe warmth into thy soul." And he disappears into the horizon at the West.

Lady Moon was filled with humiliation and anger. "I could not forgive him!" she murmured bitterly. Aye, such an unbearable insult! . . . No, she would not forgive him—that Fire-like Villain! So she went and complained to God and God consoled her, saying:

"I know it all, my child. It was he who started the quarrel and he shall be punished according to the Fixed-Law. Now go thou to thy duty." Wherefore, Lady Moon took her leave obediently with gratitude; and God, at once, summoned the Emperial black slave, who bears the bloomy title of "Eclipse," to arrest Master Sun and imprison him in a dark cell for the period of time that the Fixed-Law decreed. And when Master Sun came out of the cell he was greatly subdued. His rude and haughty manner was gone and he dare not treat Lady Moon any more with his former contempt. Ah, how true it is that failure and defeat make us be humble. . . .

However, success and victory often lead us to be conceited. From now on, Lady Moon would no longer regard Master Sun as her mate or the Master of Day. Vanity and pride were now overwhelming her and consuming up all the tenderness, loveliness, sweetness, gentleness, grace and all the refined qualities that belong to the true feminine being. She now would tease Master Sun as the "Fire-like Villain" or laugh at him as a "Jail-bird," until Master Sun cannot bear all the disdain and humiliation any longer. So he, too, went and complained to God and God consoled him, saying: "I know it all, my child. It is she who is now spoiled and she shall be punished according to the Fixed-Law. Now go thou to thy duty." Wherefore, Master Sun took his leave obediently with gratitude; and God, at once, summoned "Eclipse" to fetch Lady Moon and imprison her in a dark cell for the period of time that the Fixed-Law decreed.

Hence it is said, that whenever Master Sun or Lady Moon, commits an unprincipled act, God always knows the Truth, "Eclipse" never fails to perform his duty, and thus the Fixed-Law in Heaven never has been violated.



The Turtle and  
The Lily

A One-Act Play



## The Turtle and the Lily

### CHARACTERS

SHOO LEONG	-	-	-	-	-	<i>The Cripple</i>
SUY SEN	-	-	-	-	-	<i>The Bride</i>
MRS. SHOO	-	-	-	-	-	<i>The Mother</i>
WOO MA	-	-	-	-	-	<i>The Go-Between</i>

*The scene is the interior of a Chinese living room, richly furnished. A door on the right leads outside, another on the left to an inner room. A full-moon window center back, with green painted bars and shutters closed on the outside. A long, carved teakwood table, level to the window-sill has on it a bowl of lilies and two porcelain vases; a chair on either end. Another square table stands in the center of the room, with bamboo stools on both sides. On the table are books and writing materials. In the right hand corner stands a shrine, with a pair of candle-sticks, a censer, three cups of tea and a peanut-oil lamp hanging in front. In the left-hand corner is a small tea-stand on which are a tea-pot, a few cups in a bowl of water and a silver tobacco-pipe. Pictures adorn the walls in pairs after the Chinese fashion. The afternoon sun is shining through the chinks of the closed shutters.*

*(SHOO LEONG is seated on the left-hand side of the table by the window, reading; the MOTHER is seated on the right-hand side of the table in the center, sewing, when the curtain rises.)*

MOTHER (*complacently*)

By the blissful shadows of our ancestors, I have chosen you a sweet and beautiful wife.

SHOO LEONG (*stops reading, looks at his mother sadly and forces a smile*)

Yes, mother.

(*He opens one of the shutters and glances out, the sunlight floods over him.*)

MOTHER

The key to happiness is now in your hands.

SHOO LEONG (*turns from window*)

I'm ever earnest in craving to be happy and smile with the world (*looks out toward the sunlight again*) as brightly as the sunshine.

MOTHER

Then why do you still spend so much time in these melancholy and tragic books?

SHOO LEONG (*a little bitter*)

There is happiness in sharing another's sorrow—and solace in sympathizing with another's misfortune—and it helps one to forget one's own . . . (*he pauses abruptly as if regrets what he had just said.*)

MOTHER (*turns keenly to Shoo Leong*)

What foolish thought have you! Do you mean to say that you have sorrow to forget? Tell me, what fears are troubling you?

SHOO LEONG (*evasively*)

Nothing . . . mother . . . nothing . . .

(*Turns his face and looks out the window to conceal his feeling.*)

MOTHER (*sharply*)

Tell me . . . a son must not keep secrets from his mother.

SHOO LEONG (*mutters sadly*)

Oh, it's . . . it's . . .

MOTHER (*anxiously*)

It is what? Now be an obedient son and tell your mother what is troubling you.

(*Puts her sewing down on the table*)

SHOO LEONG

It is the sadness of the heart—how can it be put in words? . . .

MOTHER (*dumbfounded, gets up*)

Sadness of the heart . . . What . . .

(*A knock is heard at the door.*)

SHOO LEONG (*relieved*)

Oh, mother, there is some one without.

MOTHER (*sarcastically*)

No doubt a neighbor has come to borrow something.

SHOO LEONG (*in gentle reproof*)

Mother!

(*The mother crosses to the door. Enters the GO-BETWEEN wearily. SHOO LEONG continues his reading.*)

MOTHER (*surprised*)

Woo Ma! What brings you here? You look worried.

GO-BETWEEN (*excitedly*)

Calamity has befallen us! The reward of my skill as a match-maker will soon have to go to satisfy the ever hungry pockets of the honorable magistrate. . . .

MOTHER (*dismayed*)

What mean your words?

GO-BETWEEN

Chang Sen, the honorable father-in-law of your precious son is very angry and has gone to the capital to complain to the magistrate about me. He says that it is an outrage for me to deceive him and take his

lily-daughter into the nest of your turtle-son. But why should I say the bridegroom is a hunchback when he never asked? Yai, yai!

(SHOO LEONG, *who has been listening now drops low his head with great humiliation.*)

MOTHER (*turns angrily*)

How absurd! His daughter has been betrothed and married to my son according to the custom of the country, and I gave three thousand marriage cakes, four pigs, twelve flagons of pure rice wine, twelve pairs of dragon candles and four hundred pieces of gold! How dare he complain?

GO-BETWEEN

He will return the marriage gifts.

MOTHER (*bewildered*)

What will he then?

GO-BETWEEN

He will put me in jail and demand his daughter back again.

MOTHER (*fear creeps over her face*)

Demand his daughter back again! (*wails in trembling voice*). O what evil spirit is bewitching! (*throws up her hands and goes to the shrine and kneels*). O ancestors of mine, stretch your shadows to ward off the cloud of trouble that is approaching my household. (*Rises and turns to the GO-BETWEEN.*) Come, let us go consult the fortune teller at the temple and pay homage to Quan-Yim.

GO-BETWEEN

Yes, the Goddess of Mercy surely will help us.

(*The MOTHER and the GO-BETWEEN start toward the door and the MOTHER suddenly discovers that she has not the sacrificial offerings.*)

MOTHER

Wait, Woo Ma, we have not the holy incense and pure rice wine to offer and invoke the Goddess yet. Wait just a moment, I'll go and get them. . . .

*(the MOTHER hurries into the inner room  
The GO-BETWEEN crosses to SHOO  
LEONG and speaks ingratiatingly.)*

GO-BETWEEN

I have brought much trouble upon myself for your sake.

SHOO LEONG *(curtly)*

For the sake of the added fees you mean.

GO-BETWEEN *(to evade the truth)*

Has she no love for you?

SHOO LEONG

Love was not in the bargain.

*(Picks up his book and begins to read, ignoring the GO-BETWEEN. His mother returns carrying a bamboo staff and a bamboo basket which contains the wine and incense.)*

MOTHER

We must make haste. *(In a very agitated manner to SHOO LEONG)* Now my son, be calm. Be calm and pray to your blessed ancestors while I am gone.

*(She rushes out followed by the GO-BETWEEN.)*

SHOO LEONG *(he watches after them, then sinks low into the chair with an aimless sigh. After a moment of meditation he starts to recite as if to himself.)*

"Confucius said: 'The superior man can find himself in no situation in which he is not himself. If in a high situation, he does not treat with contempt his inferiors. If in a low situation, he does not court the favor of his superiors. He rectifies himself, and

seeks nothing from others, so that he has no disappointments. He does not murmur against Heaven nor grumble against men. Thus it is that the superior man is quiet and calm, waiting for the will of Heaven; while the mean man walks in dangerous paths, looking for lucky occurrences.' "

(Enters SUY SEN with two cups of tea on a tray. She looks about in surprise.)

SUY SEN

Where is your venerable mother?

SHOO LEONG

She has gone to the temple to offer her prayers before the altar of Quan-Yim.

SUY SEN (*innocently*)

What favor does she seek?

SHOO LEONG

She prays for the happiness of our household.

SUY SEN (*puts the tray on the table and offers a cup to the husband with both hands*)

Has the Goddess the power to grant that?

SHOO LEONG (*takes a sip of tea*)

No—it is only within the power of our own hearts.

SUY SEN (*sadly*)

I wonder—does happiness ever visit mortals? . . .

SHOO LEONG

That depends upon what you deem happiness.

SUY SEN

What mean you, my lord?

SHOO LEONG (*wisely*)

For some happiness lies in bringing joy to another, and some it comes at another's expense. Then there is happiness in solitude and meditation.

SUY SEN (*aimlessly*)

What is your happiness, my lord?



SHOO LEONG (*with a soft sigh, gazing at her affectionately*)

I have found happiness in the trees, the moon, in books and dreams, but—but now I must choose anew. Now I may snatch it at the expense of another's suffering, or I may seek it in giving to another what I lose. But it is only the animal that could sacrifice another's life to satisfy his own greed. . . .

SUY SEN

What mean you, my lord?

SHOO LEONG

My mother thought to make me very happy when she brought you—beautiful and sweet as the newly bloomed lily—for my wife. Indeed, I forgot the trees and the flowers, my books and even myself . . . when I beheld you. . . . But to the moon my misshapen body brings no distress. The rose does not draw back from my caress . . . but to you . . .

SUY SEN

How I long to be like the flowers that do not feel.

SHOO LEONG

What does life seem to you, SUY SEN?

SUY SEN

We poor mortals are born only to suffer until the years have worn away . . . .

SHOO LEONG (*pitifully*)

For me—perhaps—but not you—you should know life's joy.

SUY SEN (*smiles sadly*)

It is not thus that fate decrees

SHOO LEONG (*suddenly, after a moment of silence*)

Will you do something for me?

SUY SEN (*hesitating*)

I will seek ever to fulfill my wifely duties.

SHOO LEONG (*firmly, yet a little bitter in tone*)

Fate is a deceiver—I am not your life-mate—I wish you to go back to your home. Another will come—one who will bring you happiness. Now go, at once. It is not right for me to hold you—and your father is right (*more bitterly*). Yes, he is right—a lily will not grow in a turtle's nest. . . .

SUY SEN (*bewildered with doubt*)

What mean you, my lord?

SHOO LEONG

I mean what I said—oh, you needn't doubt me—perhaps—my features are ugly, but my heart is not, my conscience is not, my soul is not . . . now go—sweet one. I will give you the written words to free you from the binding of our marriage. . . .

SUY SEN (*perplexed*)

But your mother—the people of the village—our customs. . . .

SHOO LEONG

Custom is a tyranny to which my mother is a slave and so are all the village people! Ah, what do they matter . . . they can't stop me from doing right—They can't break the heart of humanity!

SUY SEN

But you, my lord?

SHOO LEONG

The flame of my life has been quenched by the earthly water of sorrow long ago, and its ash has become as tranquil as the impassive Buddha. My heart is like a canary in an iron cage; oh, how it craves to be free,—to soar into the great space of celestial blue! Alas, too great hath my soul suffered within this hideous imprisonment of flesh. . . . Shall I permit another to suffer as I? . . . No! my solace must come through another's joy.

SUY SEN

But I should remain. . . .

SHOO LEONG

Do not delay. Happiness was never built on deceit. Go pack at once ere my mother returns.

SUY SEN (*kneeling beside his chair*)

My father and ancestors will add their gratitude to mine, my lord, for this great generosity.

SHOO LEONG

You must not loiter.

(*She goes into the inner room. SHOO LEONG watches after her then rises and walks slowly to the table in the center of the room*)

SHOO LEONG (*murmuring sadly*)

She will go . . . she will go . . .

(*He sits down at the table and writes the letter. Soft music is being played during this scene. SUY SEN enters with her bundle, trying to conceal her joy and fear.*)

SHOO LEONG

Are you ready?

SUY SEN

Yes, my lord.

(*She kneels beside him. He finishes the letter and putting it in a Chinese envelope hands it to her.*)

SHOO LEONG

Keep this carefully. The cage is open now. Fly, my beautiful phoenix . . . fly far and high to the paradise that the gods have prepared for you.

SUY SEN

Your nobleness overcomes me, my lord. All my life long I shall pray blessings for you. (*She rises and bows.*)

SHOO LEONG

Farewell—sweet lily . . .

(SUY SEN goes to the door, pauses and looks back in gratitude. The gate clicks outside Both start at the sound.)

SHOO LEONG (*agitatingly*)

It's mother at the gate! Go by the back path—  
(*pointing to the other door*) . . . quick! . . .

(SUY SEN rushes across to the inner room.

SHOO LEONG picks up his book and pretends to be reading when the mother enters.)

MOTHER (*a little weary*)

Ah, my son, are you at peace?

(*She sits on the other side of the table.*)

SHOO LEONG (*with an effort of concealment*)

Yes, mother.

MOTHER

Thank for the mercy of the Goddess. We needn't be afraid. The fortune teller says that our trouble is but a drifting cloud which the blissful wind will blow to nothingness ere it approaches our household. And here is Quan-Yim's answer to my prayers.

(*She gives him a piece of paper which he unfolds and reads aloud to her*):

“True gold fears no fire,

A single hand cannot shade the sun's light.

If the heart holds no evil desire

Then shall the days of your future be bright.”

MOTHER (*self-righteously*)

Right has ever controlled my actions, so I need not fear. I am thirsty after my long journey. Where is my daughter-in-law? Let her bring me tea.

SHOO LEONG (*startled, in effort to be calm*)

She is not here.

MOTHER (*sharply*)

Not here?

SHOO LEONG

She . . . she . . .

MOTHER

Speak—where is she?

SHOO LEONG

She has gone . . .

MOTHER

Gone where?

SHOO LEONG (*mustering up his courage*)

She has gone back to her mother's house.

MOTHER (*gets up with alarm*)

Gone! . . . back to her mother's house? . . . The wicked woman! The evil one! (*turning to SHOO LEONG*) You stupid pig, could you not even keep her until my return?

SHOO LEONG (*pauses frightened*)

I sent her thence.

MOTHER (*incredulous and then angry*)

You let her go? . . . You sent her thence? . . . You fool! (*She picks up her bamboo staff, in rage.*) Who has given you such authority? When did you get such evil thoughts to betray your mother? Have you gone insane?

(*Her voice rises higher and higher as she advances toward SHOO LEONG.*)

SHOO LEONG (*alarmed, drops from the stool and kneels before her*)

Mother mine, most reverent mother. I did not mean to disobey you—or to hurt your feelings . . . I sent her away . . . because . . . I—I could not be happy by seeing her suffer . . . Forgive me, mother!

. . .

MOTHER (*boiling with rage*)

Ingrate! after all that I have done for you. Weak, brainless fool. If you are not manly enough to wish a wife—what of me—what of my happiness? Shall I have no daughter to wait on me in my old age? . . .

SHOO LEONG (*trembling*)

Mother, forgive me—I am stupid and weak—I know . . . but . . . oh, I could not resist the promptings of my heart . . . Forgive me. I'm weak . . . I . . . .

MOTHER

But strong enough to defy my wish! You . . . . .

(*She raises the bamboo staff as if to strike him. He is frightened and tries to get up and run, but in vain—the stick falls upon his deformed back and hurts the sensitive nerves. He falls senseless to the floor. (in the struggle the blow is given more by accident than by cruel intention.) The mother, her anger gone, stands looking at him dazed as the curtain falls.*

(*Sad music to be played as the curtain is lowered.*)

\* \* \* \* \*

(*When the curtain rises again several days have elapsed. The table, in the center of the room, and the stools have been removed and a couch has been placed upon which SHOO LEONG is lying, seriously ill. There are bottles of medicine and dishes on the table by the window and a slight disorder of things shows an atmosphere of a sick room. The pea-nut-oil lamp, in front of the shrine, is lighted and a candle on the table. The moonlight shimmers thru the open shutters. Other lights should be subdued and should only allow enough to illuminate the facial expression. The mother enters from the*

*inner room with a bowl of steaming rice broth which she tastes and cools. All solicitude—a mingling of anxiety and remorse.)*

MOTHER (*tenderly*)

Come, sip you this my son; it will drive away the evil spirits and make you well again.

*(She puts the bowl to his mouth, but he weakly motions it away.)*

MOTHER (*imploringly*)

You must drink it. You grow weaker with every breath. Oh, my son, my son, forgive your wicked mother and regain your health. *(She dips out a spoonful of broth.)* Come, just a taste.

*(SHOO LEONG motions her away gently but firmly. The MOTHER puts the bowl down in despair and goes over to the ancestral altar and begins to pray. Her supplications rise in rythmical tone.)*

*(SUY SEN enters in the same attire as she had left; looks about and is startled at seeing SHOO LEONG in bed. She pauses abruptly as she hears the mother's wailing. Doubt and fear creep over her face. After a moment she timidly and frightenedly moves toward the sick-bed and kneels beside it, looking at the pale face of her husband.)*

SHOO LEONG (*opens his eyes and sees her. With a weak move of surprise he murmurs.*)

You—you—*(He stares at her with a sense of illusion.)*

SUY SEN (*lowers her eyelids in repentance*)

I have come back to you, my lord.

*(The MOTHER, hearing voices, turns and sees SUY SEN. She springs up and advances toward her, eyes blazing with hatred.)*

MOTHER

You—wicked woman! . . . See what you have caused. My son—my only son. . . You vile creature! . . . *(She makes a menacing gesture toward SUY SEN.)*

SHOO LEONG *(Throwing back the covers in an attempt to rise)*

Mother!

*(The single word arrests the mother's anger. She lets her hands drop to her side. SUY SEN springs to support SHOO LEONG as he falls back on the couch, choking.)*

SUY SEN *(believing that she has caused his illness)*

May the gods forgive me. My noble husband, you have sought my happiness at the cost of your suffering. But now my heart knows the true love . . . and the beauty of your soul.

SHOO LEONG *(putting out a hand and touching her gently, with a sad-happy smile)*

Oh, my beloved wife . . . beautiful lily . . . you have never brought me suffering. There can be no grief for me if I know that you are happy . . . *(his voice lowers at every breath).*

SUY SEN *(choked with tears)*

I am not worthy. . . .

MOTHER *(impressed by their conversation begins to weep)*

Oh, my son, my only son . . . for your mother's sake . . . get well . . . *(she kneels beside SUY SEN.)*

SHOO LEONG *(mustering his strength with an effort)*

No longer will my mortal eyes behold the flowers and moon . . . *(to SUY SEN)* and you . . . my lily . . .



but I'm happy . . . you are here. . . . . you here  
. . . . . I hap-py . . . . . hap . . . . . py . . .  
(His lips frame the word again but he cannot  
speak. SUY SEN leans closer to catch the word  
as death slowly seals his eyes.)

MOTHER (in desperate grief)

Oh, my son, my son—so you leave me forever—oh  
Heaven,—oh my fate; how cruel! (She covers her  
face with her sleeve and mourns in agony.)

SUY SEN (touches his hand with frightened awe; she  
breaks into a long wail)

My husband . . . oh, my husband . . . . .  
(Soft music being played with the sobbing of  
the women.)

SUY SEN (slowly raises her head in a calm and brave  
manner as if addressing the departing spirit)


O my lord of the yonder world . . . may you know  
. . . (pauses with a choke of tears) here will I stay  
and serve your mother as mine . . . . . and tend  
the flowers of our love while you wait for me in the  
full bloom of your soul's eternal beauty.

MOTHER (moved by SUY SEN'S word, raises her  
head, gazing at her with humility)

My daughter . . . . .

(The MOTHER stretches her hands in forgive-  
ness and grief. SUY SEN turns and looks pa-  
thetically into the mother's eyes, then slowly  
bows with hands and forehead touching the  
floor in reverence. The MOTHER tenderly  
bends and raises her. Both looking at each  
other understandingly with tears.)

*The Curtain Falls*



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*The Author wishes to express his appreciation to Miss Bertha Fiske, Miss Katherine Nelson and Mr. Floyd Storm for their assistance in the making of this book.*

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